

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 6, 9, and 10 as being anticipated by the teachings in U.S. Patent 5,301,415 to Prinz. The Examiner also rejected claims 1 – 11, 14, 15, and 17 – 23 as being anticipated by the teachings of U.S. Patent 6,027,630 to Cohen. The Examiner also rejected claims 12, 13, and 16 as being obvious over the teaching of the 6,027,630 patent to Cohen.

Based on the amendments set forth above and the remarks to follow it is believed that these rejections are traversed.

Applicant agrees that Cohen and Prinz teach the mating of masks to substrates or to previously deposited materials. In particular, Cohen teaches (at column 5, lines 25 – 47) that the patterned mask is sufficiently deformable to permit conformance of the mask surface to the surface of the substrate. Cohen also teaches at column 5, lines 57 – 58, that the patterned mask is preferably substantially planar and smooth to enable conformance to the substrate to be plated. This conformability of the masks is provided to account for imperfections in the contours of the contact surface of the mask and the surface of the substrate. Nowhere does Cohen or Prinz teach that the mask and substrate should be brought together in a non-parallel manner (i.e. in any orientation other than parallel). Neither Cohen nor Prinz explicitly or implicitly teach that mating of a mask and a substrate could be enhanced by either intentionally providing them with different surface contours or bringing them together in a non-parallel manner as is the subject of the instant application. The essence of the invention intending to be claimed is set forth in FIGS. 6A – 6C, 7A – 7C, and 8A – 8G of the present application. In FIGS. 6A – 6C the mask and the substrate are brought together intentionally at an angle (i.e. in a non-parallel manner) so as to avoid trapping fluid (electrolyte) between the mating surfaces of the mask and the substrates during the mating process. The fluid may flow to the right during the progressive mating process so as to allow enhanced mating of the surfaces. In FIGS. 7A – 7C, the mask and the substrate are provided with significantly different curvatures and they are brought together at an angle (i.e. in a non-parallel manner) so that excess fluid will not inadvertently be trapped between the mask and the substrate as can occur when using parallel mating of non-perfect surfaces. In FIGS. 8A – 8G, the mask and the substrate are again provided with different nominal curvatures so that upon progressive mating fluid may flow to the sides away from the central mating regions to allow while mating is occurring. As such features

are not taught by either Cohen or Prinz and as the concept of progressive mating with intentional fluid removal paths have been added to each independent claim it is believed the application is now in condition for allowance.

In view of the amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections is earnestly requested. If any questions should arise concerning this application (or if it would otherwise be useful to discuss this application) please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned by phone.

Respectfully submitted,

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